THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Nuclear science is being used in agricultural research for the following:—

(i) for developing new varieties through mutation having characters like high yield, better quality, resistance to stress conditions etc.:

(ii) for studying the efficiency of fertiliser and water use by the plants under different cropping systems;

(iii) for quick estimation of oil content in oilseed varieties;

(iv) for control of insect pest through introduction of male sterility;

(v) for estimation of residual effect of pesticides;

(vi) for preservation of grains, fruits and vegetables.

(b) Nine research Institutes and seven Agricultural Universities in the country are using radio-active isotopes in agricultural research. The main work is being done at Nuclear Research Laboratory, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Bombay.

Salt effervescence in coastal Gujarat

*288. SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA:

SHRI SHANTI TYAGI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the coastal areas of Gujarat are facing a severe problem of salt effervescence rendering hundreds of square kilometres of fertile lands barren; and

(b) if so, what are the causes of this problem and what remedial measures are proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

Coastal belt salinity problem is a natural phenomenon connected with the high tides and waves of the sea. The problem is caused during the tide inundating large areas of the coastal land. Frequent inundation with saline water render the land progressively saline and in course of time make it unfit for cultivation. Beyond this natural limit, many cases of human interference *viz.* heavy withdrawal of sweet ground water etc. have contributed to the aggravation of the problem. The problem of salinity in Gujarat State is prevalent in Saurashtra and Kutch Regions, where according to an estimate, about five to eight kilometres of the land from the shore line has become saline.

However, available technology can offer some level of protection to the escalation of the phenomenon of coastal land salinity. Government of Gujarat are implementing various measures such as tidal regulators, bandharas, check dams, recharge tanks, recharge wells, nalia plus, afforestation, etc. as per need. The Khar Land Development Board of Gujarat has been continuing protection measures for coastal land against ingress of sea water by constructing earthen bunds with necessary cross drainage work as per the provisions of Gujarat Khar Land Act, 1983. Technical guidance is given to the farmers to reclaim their lands through leaching of salt, addition of gypsums green manuring and recommending various salt tolerant crops.

Export of Kids as slaves

*293. SHRI J. P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item published in the Times of India on the 6th February, 1986 under the caption 'Alleged export of kids as slaves';